/208 cont./

796 through the village and meet in front of the festival house for a [794] ceremonial salutation. They exchange brandy, chicha, and candles, each giving the other exactly the same thing /209/ that [537] he himself receives. After they have mutually complimented each [431] other sufficiently, they turn to the bystanders, make a short speech to the effect that everyone should enjoy himself, and distribute everything to the people standing around. Soon afterward 796 532 all gather on the plaza in front of the church, where now the "vacaloca" is lighted. This "crazy cow" consists of a number of flexible twigs bent into semicircles and held together on the underside by cross-rods; they are fastened one behind the other, which gives the structure the shape of a half-cylinder. This is covered with a cowhide and forms the body of the crazy cow. On one end is fastened a cow's skull modeled out of bast and newspaper to look as real as possible, and on the other end, a stick wound with agave fiber as a tail. A strong young man takes the frame of the cow on his shoulders and it is then lit at the specially prepared places on horns and tail. While music is played, the young man goes across the square in a zigzag, during which the young people try to tease the cow, while it, in turn, tries to get the bold ones on its horns. The meaning of this game is not clear to the Paez. It looks as though it were a poorly understood imitation of a popular bullfight.

796 Everybody now returns to the festival houses, where the musicians have taken their places on a bench on the narrow end of the festival house. The women squat in one corner in a large [273] group with their children. And then begins the feast, at which everyone, men, women, and children, may eat and drink as much as he is able, with the exception of the fiesteros, who have the sole right to pour the chicha and brandy and do not themselves become intoxicated, in order to be able to carry out their duty well. The festival guests do not go home for the duration of the festival, but eat, drink, and sleep in the festival houses, stretched out full length on the floor wherever they happen to be. The festival goes on with more or less intensity -- as far as eating and drinking are concerned -- throughout the entire week; at any rate, no one works, but at most goes from house to house "pasnyándo."